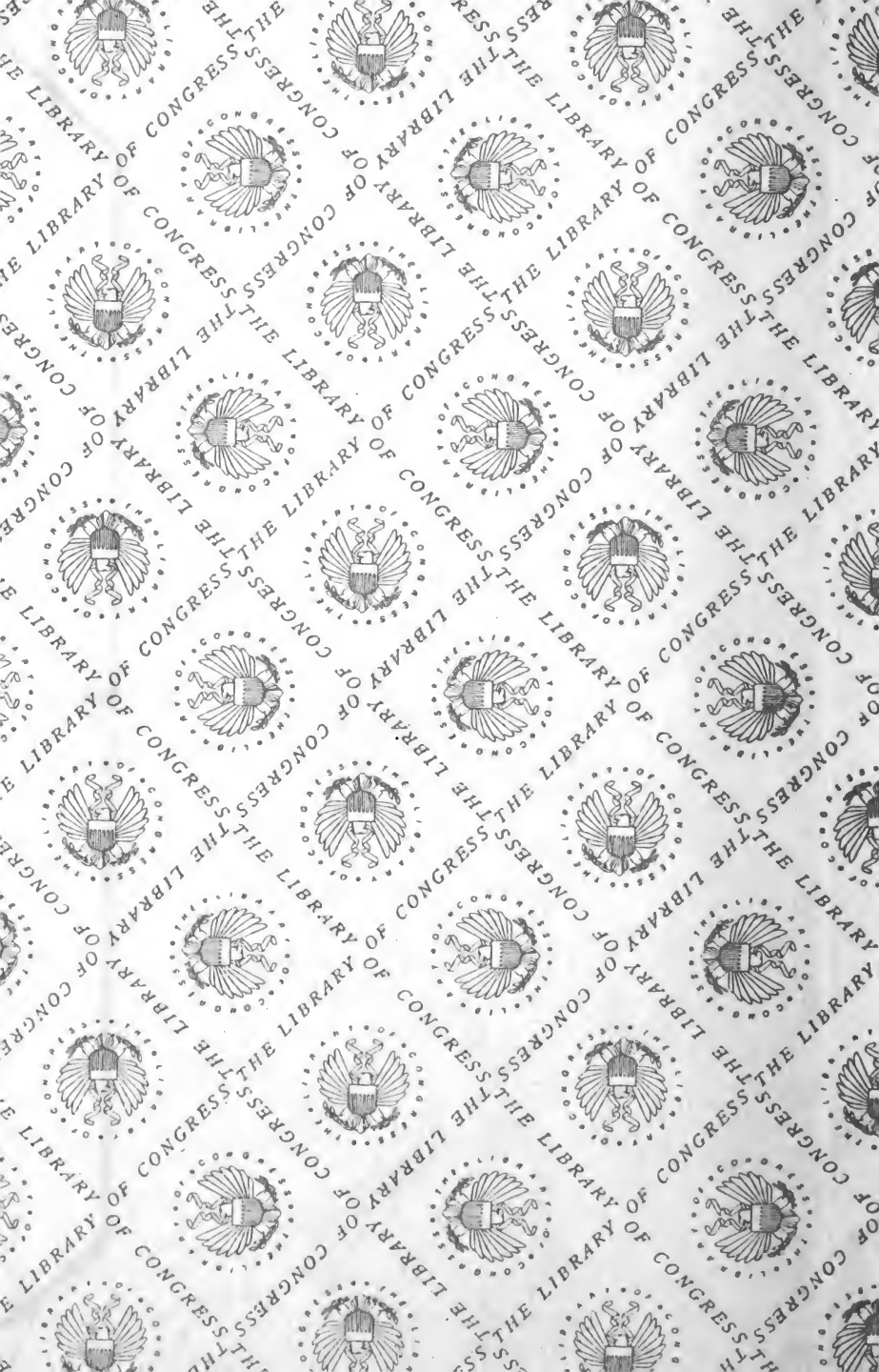
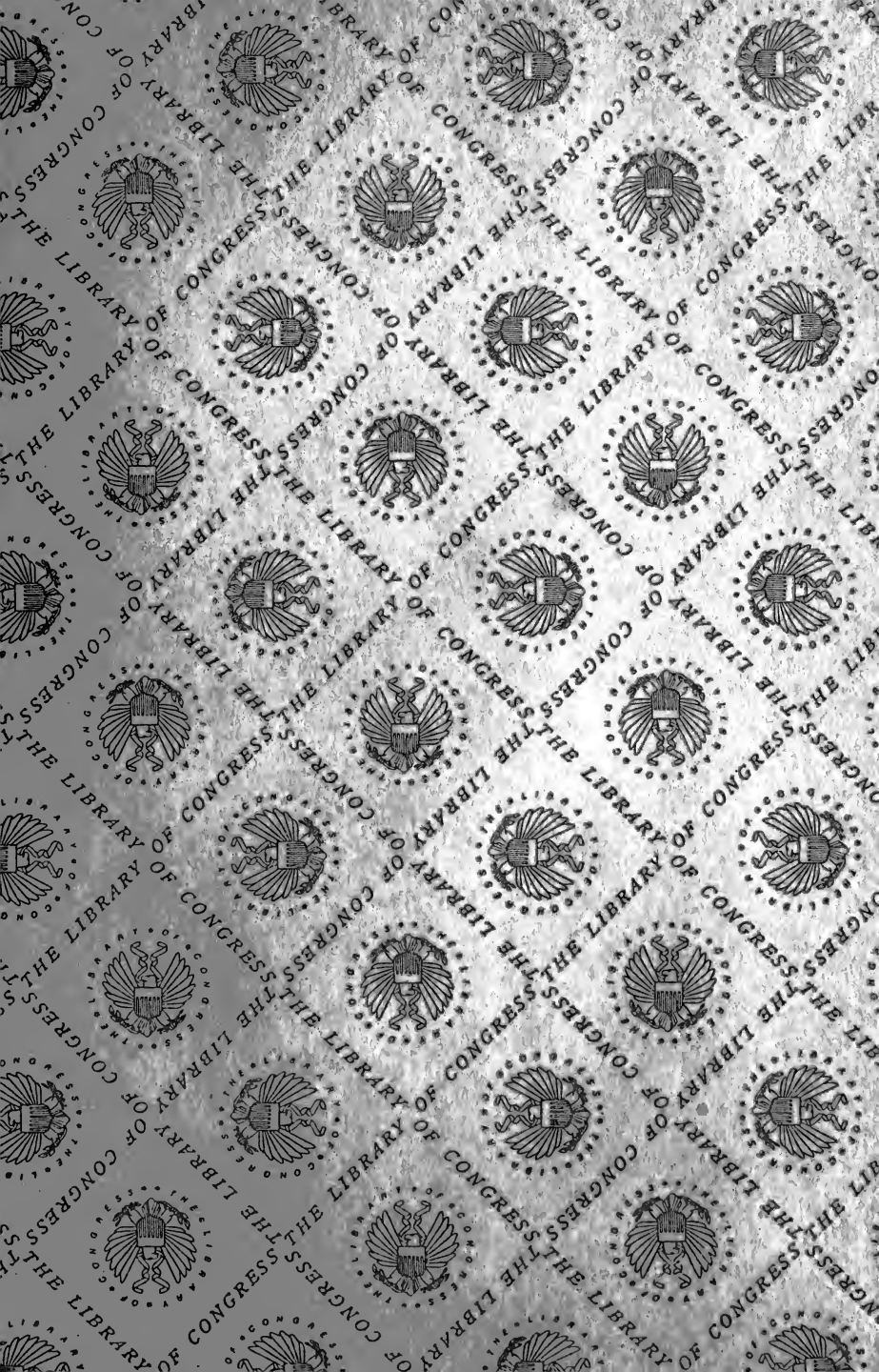


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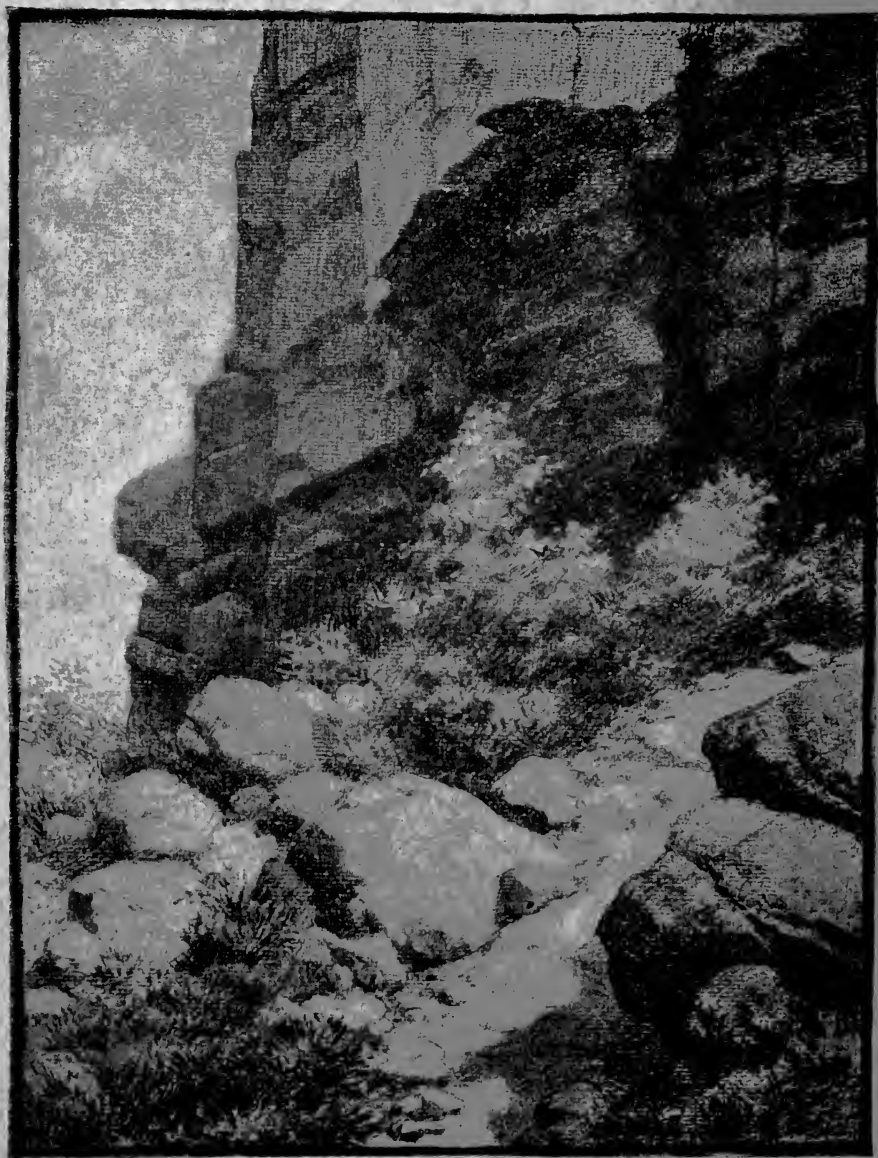
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THE LEGEND OF SAM'S POINT.



P the mountain-side the old
trail winds ;
On the swampy moor a path
it finds ;
It clambers over the lichened rock ;
It circles around the stumps
which block

Its way through the tangled wood ; it sprawls
Through the stony pasture land ; it crawls
Into many a ferny nook
As it seeks the bank of the shaded brook
Which it crosses on stepping stones.

Would you follow this trail—take heed !
While its wild allure is sweet
It has pitfalls for the feet
Of the careless wanderer.
In his reckless, headlong speed
The whips of the low-branched trees,
Urged on by the zealous breeze,
Shall give him many a sting.
He must ever mind his steps
If he use the old dead log

As a bridge to the bubbling spring
Or its treacherous moss may give
And he'll sink to the inky depths
Of an unexpected bog.

When was this old trail made? Who knows?
When the first of the redman's foes
Came into the land and called it new
And found it fair,
It was there.

He followed its curvings far
From some vantage point to view
The lay of a goodly land.
And there he made his stand.

He said to himself: "This is mine.
I will take these valleys fine
And rich with the powdered mould
Brought down by the mountain stream;
They will yield me a thousand fold.
I will take the mountain-side
Where the furry beasts now bide
And the trees that grow thereon.
No longer will I roam;
I will build myself a home;
I will dig me a garden plot
And fence me a farm about."
So he worked with a hand untired
And did as his heart desired—
He and hundreds of men like him.

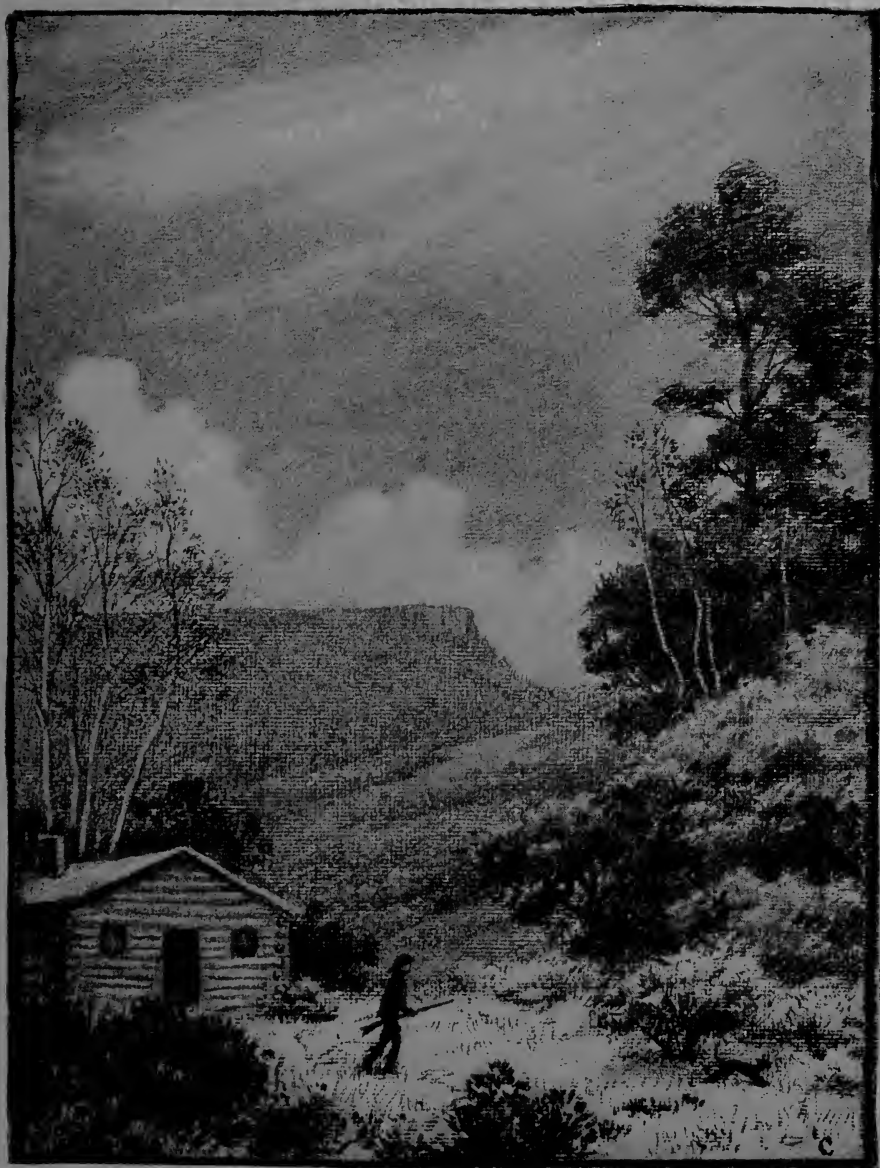
For the savage Indian tribes
Whose feet had worn the trail
Over hill and brook and dale
He had only mocking gibes.
Though they were born on the soil
And knew it as their own,
He made it Fortune's spoil.
But bitter must he atone;
For the savages wrought what harm
They could to the settler's farm,
To his flourishing garden plot,
To the cows in his pasture lot,
To his calves and pigs in pens,
To his good wife's cocks and hens,—
And to those of his neighbor as well.

Before he awoke from his dream
Of a happy life under favoring skies,
Of an unburdened life
Far away from strife,
A terrible feud was on
And the peace he sought for gone.
His house was burned and his garden trod,
His growing corn returned to the sod
And his cattle driven away;
His children cried and trembled with fright
And his wife could not sleep in the restless night
For dread of the coming day;
And he must begin again—
He and the neighboring men.

No one wrote this history then.
We shall never know it well.
But Tradition began its tales to tell;
They have echoed through the years ;
And my pen has listening ears
And writes one story down.

It writes of a mighty man
With a queer old Dutch surname
Who as Sam is known to fame.
He was fleet of foot and strong of limb ;
His piercing eye
As it swept the sky
Could name each bird on its distant wing ;
The coming breezes brought to him
The news of the forest happening ;
With all of the woodman's needed skill
His clumsy axe was a tool at will ;
And with the Indian's inborn craft
He tracked his prey and sent his shaft ;
He had a heavy hand ;
And his word had weight in the land.

He had also a kindly heart
And he played a friendly part
For each settler far and near
When the trees were felled a space to clear
Where must stand the new log house.
Or when famine came ere the crops were grown
He gave what he could from out his own.



But he reckoned the Indians not as men—
They were vicious beasts of prey—
And he thought that the Lord applauded him
For each redskin less in the white man's way;—
And his neighbors thought with him.

So whenever the corn
Was trampled and torn,
They armed themselves in a righteous wrath
And followed the foe on a vengeful path
And shot him merciless down.
But the foemen too were valorous men
As ever they rallied and rallied again;
It was blood for blood
And the horrible feud went on.

One glorious day
When the fields were gay
With aster and goldenrod—
When bright and bold,
Red, brown and gold,
Shone the trees in Shawangunk's wood—
On such a day,
The stories say,
This venturous man
Went up on the mountain-side
To visit his traps which were scattered wide
Wherever the mink and muskrat hide;
For the hills were his autumn harvest ground
And his crops the furry beasts he found.

As he thought the enemy far away
He deemed it safe unarmed to stray,
So he set his gun by his rude hearthstone
And, save for his dog, went forth alone.

As he set his traps he thought of the skins
That were piled on an upper shelf;
Of the pleasant way that he must take
When he went with a pack
On his sturdy back

To a busy town on a river's bank
Where he'd change his pelts for pelf.
He thrilled with the thought of the bargain keen
He must make for his wife's new dress
With linings and buttons and thread complete;
And the Sunday shoes for his children's feet;
And powder and lead and things like these;
Then he felt his dog at his knees.

He curses the gun he has left behind
And he curses the thoughts that had dulled his mind
To the stealthy hurrying tread
Of the warriors on his track.

He stops not to send a quick glance back
But slips through the whirls of impeding ferns
And climbs the bank where the wild stream turns
And seeks for the notches that blaze the trail
Where he hopes to elude his foes.

His flying feet crush the torpid snail
And break the silence there.



The little beasts bound
 Away from the sound;
But the startled deer
 Have nought to fear;
And the great black bear
 Need not turn to stare
For he's past ere they know him near.

He cannot rest
 When he reaches the crest
Of Shawangunk's toilsome slope;
 He may not think
Of a welcome drink
 In passing Maratanza's brink;
For his foemen reach
 Its narrow beach
Almost as soon as he;
 So he catches his breath
And races with Death
 To a goal he cannot see.

There's a great plain lying below his path—
 A plain covered over with time-old trees
Whose velvety tops sway soft in the breeze;
 But he heeds them not as he onward springs
Over roots and stones and hindering things.

He straightens himself at last on the brink
 Where the great rock wall drops sheer.
He raises his hands to his aching eyes

And sees that the sun is setting clear
As it sinks to the plain behind Bear Hill;
And he longs for the safe and cool retreat
Where Bruin in winter sleeps.

Has it come—the moment of his defeat?
He knows that this is the end of the race
As vainly he seeks for a hiding place;
For they 've covered the path down the dangerous steeps
And of one through the caves he has lost the trace.
There is nothing to see but the swaying tops
Of the heaven-aspiring trees,—
The velvety masses of evergreen trees—
Staring up in his frightened face
As they offer their arms for a safe embrace.

An instant he gazed at the sickening deep,
Then nerved himself for the perilous leap—
And the yell of the savage who saw him there
Was echoing still when the rock was bare
In the face of the setting sun.

The Indians crept to the bare rock's edge
And looked for a dying foe;
There was nothing to see but the banners green
Of the militant hemlock trees
Standing guard in the depths below,—
The evergreen mass of wondering trees
Whose murmuring twigs swept back in the breeze
But did not tell
What there befell.



CONCLUSION.

The story ends in a comforting way :

The baffled savages could not stay
To tear the scalp from their victim's head ;
They must swiftly fly for their lives instead ;
They had felt the beat
Of hurrying feet

As they lay outstretched in the sun's last glow
And stared at the swaying trees below ;
They knew that the neighbors had armed in wrath
And were up and out on a murderous path ;
So they cautiously slipped through cave and glen
And away down the trail to their tribes again.

As for the hero, the neighbors found
Him all unharmed on the cushioned ground ;
The outspread arms of the tough hemlocks
Had thwarted his threatened fate ;
For, bending beneath his falling weight,
They had passed him down from limb to limb
Till he rocked in a cradle made for him
By the interlacing trees.
The whispering twigs laughed low in the breeze
As they bade him live on for deeds like these.

Would you proof of the truth
Of this well known tale
You have only to find the same old trail

,,
,,
,, ,

And follow it on
Till it leads to the edge
Of the great rock ledge
Which to-day bears the hunter's name.
As you shield your eyes from the blinding sun
You can see for yourself where the deed was done.

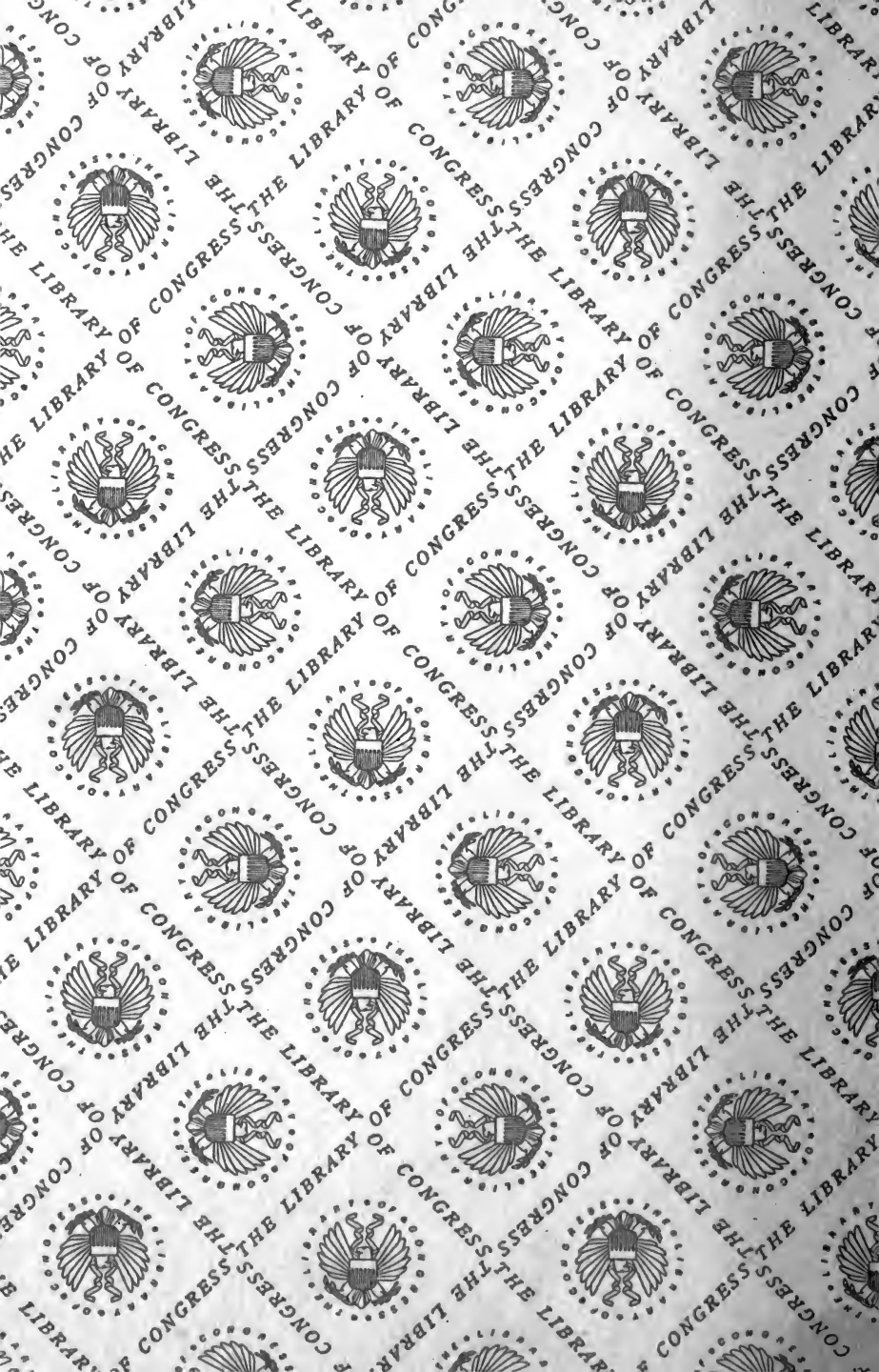
NOTE.—Samuel Gonsalus (familiarily known as Sam Consawley)
was a famous hunter and scout. The episode related in the
“Legend” occurred in the autumn of 1758.

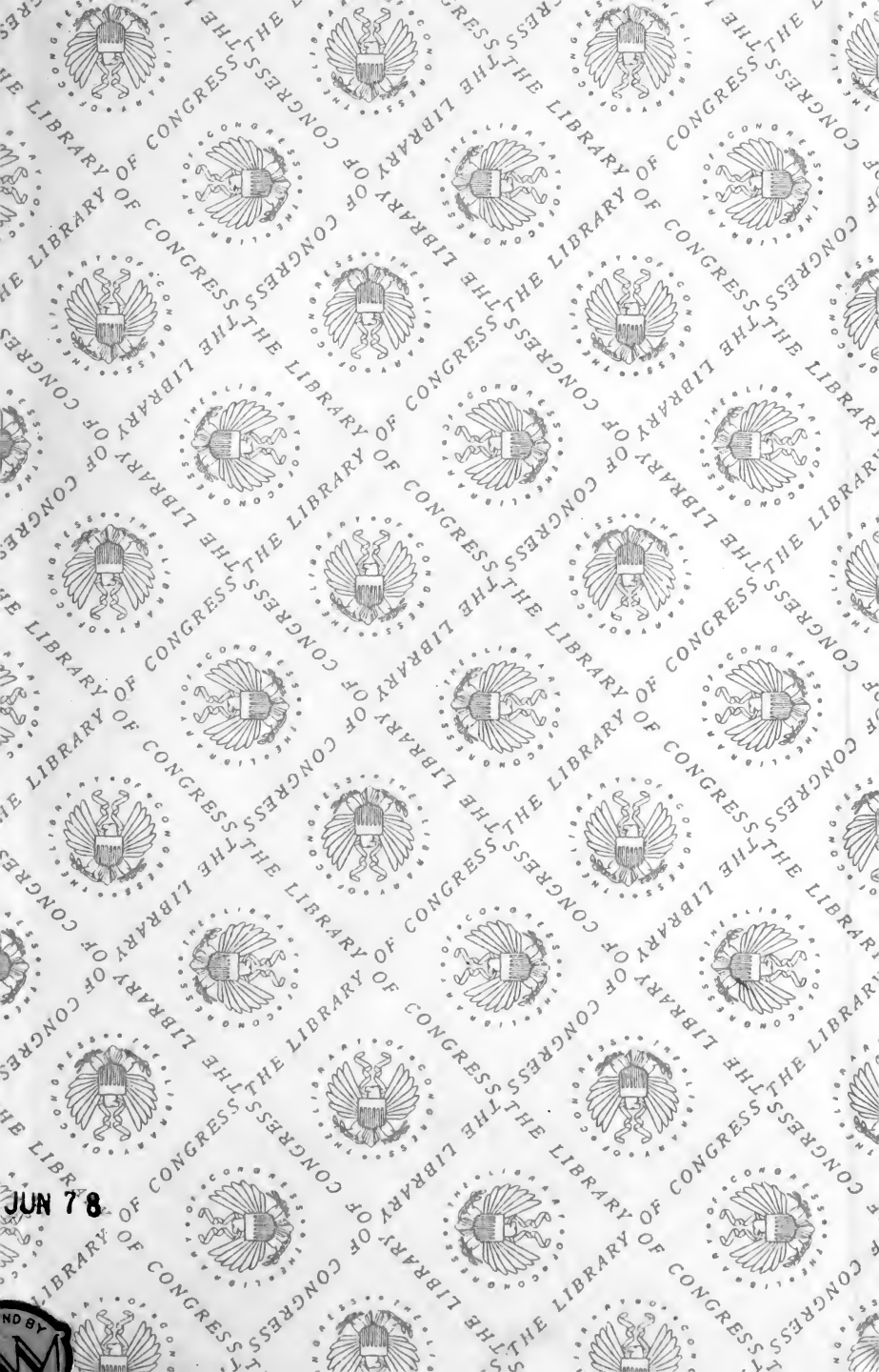


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